

SWITCHING COMPRESSED VIDEO STREAMS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for providing fast switching between video tracks is presented. Video packets are defined as each having a size of less than one group of pictures (GOP). These video packets are combined in an interleaved fashion and may be written to a storage medium. When obtaining interleaved video stream elements from a storage medium or from a video stream, each video stream element is read such that the read buffer contains data for a particular frame from each of the tracks. A video stream element may be a packet of size less than one GOP or an interleaved video unit (IlVU) containing one or more GOPs. Because multiple views of the particular frame are resident in the read buffer, a decoder may respond to a command to change video tracks simply by reading a different location in the read buffer, rather than first loading additional track information into the read buffer. The video stream elements are locked into the read buffer when switching between tracks.